CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) No, Sir.

Adequate storage capacity exists with the Food Corporation of India (FCI), the Central Warehousing Corporation (CWC), the State Warehousing Corporations (SWC) and other State agencies for storage of foodgrains. Besides, the field officers of FCI have been delegated full powers to hire additional storage capacity as and when necessary.

(b) and (c) FCI also hiring storage capacity from private sector for storage of foodgrains. As on 1.1.2000, FCI has hired 57.04 Lakh MT from Private sector.

Monitoring of FPSs by Panchayats

164. SHRI SUKHDEV SINGH LIBRA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to involve panchayats to monitor the fair price shops all over the country; and

(b) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir, Implementation of Public Distribution System (PDS) in the joint responsibility of the Central Government and the State Government/UT Administrations. The Administration of the PDS including distribution of the PDS commodities to the consumers through fair price shops is the responsibility of the State Government/UT Administrations Based on the belief truly democratic institution do better safeguard, than the State bureaucracy the Government has sought more substantial involvement of Gram Panchayats in the supervision and monitoring of PDS specially at the Fair Price Shops (FPS) level as a measure of social audit. Under the guidelines for implementation of TPDS State Governments were asked to involve Gram Panchayats and Gram Sabhas in the identification of eligible families below poverty line

(BPL). Guidelines have been recently issued for greater involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the functioning TPDS. This includes:

— Right to information for consumers regarding Fair Price Shops (FPS), entitlement, price, number of cards attached to shop etc.

— Display of stock position at FPS.

— List of BPL beneficiaries to be displayed at FPS and office of Gram Panchayat for public scrutiny.

— Formation of FPS Committee by Gram Panchayat for inspecting the FPS records and to keep a watch on functioning of FPS. FPS committee's report to be placed before larger body i.e., Gram Sabhas for onward transmission to State Government for taking necessary action.

— Responsibility of the Gram Panchayats in checking of ration cards occasionally for its genuineness and correct entries of units in them.

— Redressal of grievances.

Allocation to Assam under PDS

165. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what is the monthly quota fixed for various essential commodities distributed through Public Distribution System in Assam;

(b) the details of actual release of quota for the State during the last three years; and

(c) the steps being taken or proposed to be taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHRIRAM CHAUHAN): (a) The monthly quota of rice and wheat fixed for Assam under the Targeted Public Distribution System